



## Prepare a Career Portfolio

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**DEFINITION** The **Career Portfolio** is a student's collection of his/her favorite examples of work, accomplishments, and progress toward career goals.

**PURPOSE** A portfolio is an effective way to show prospective employers evidence of an applicant's knowledge and skills and ability to perform job responsibilities in a particular occupation.

Each student should be encouraged to prepare a portfolio over time to help document their individual accomplishments and goals, regardless of the length of time spent in the program or the level of competencies achieved. The career portfolio is individualized and should represent the student's best work as well as identify areas of needed improvement.

Students should also be encouraged to review and update the contents of their portfolio periodically, so that they will be better prepared to apply for a new job or seek a promotion as opportunities become available.

**BENEFITS** As students develop their portfolios, they will learn the importance of monitoring their educational progress and career planning activities. This development process will assist students in highlighting their essential technical skills, an accomplishment that becomes a valuable tool in their future job search. Students will also benefit from the process of developing and maintaining a portfolio by:

- ☐ Learning to take responsibility for compiling portfolio materials that best demonstrate their strengths and skills.
- ☐ Increasing their awareness of the relationship between their growth and achievement and the attainment of their career goals.
- ☐ Learning to select those accomplishments that will best sell them to an employer and address marketplace needs.
- ☐ Identifying, practicing, and improving technical or academic skills in areas needing a higher competency level.
- ☐ Learning more about careers in their field of interest as well as the courses and skills necessary for achieving those careers.
- ☐ Improving the skills related to portfolio development such as writing and research.
- ☐ Increasing their self-esteem and confidence.

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Portfolio was neat and legible
- Documentation of skills was included
- Appropriate items were included for each section

**MATERIALS** 3-ring, clear view binder (black or gray recommended)  
13 top loading sheet protectors  
Computer access  
Computer paper  
Expandable binder, large  
3 ½" diskette  
Items to be included

**CONTENT** The career portfolio is truly a student-managed collection of experiences and projects. There are no required components—the content of each student's portfolio will vary according to the student's education/technical experiences and goals. Students should be oriented to the process of developing a portfolio and be provided ideas for possible components such as the ones listed below.

☐ **Cover Page.** This may be provided by your instructor, and will be inserted in the front of your binder. If one is not provided, create your own and include the title, "Career Portfolio" and your school name.  
Hint: Keep it simple. Your career portfolio should look professional.

☐ **First Page.** This may also be provided by your instructor, and will be the first page inside the binder. A blank sheet before this page is recommended to avoid having ink stick to inside binder if it gets hot or damp. If one is not provided, create your own and include the following:

Portfolio  
For  
(Your Name)

☐ **Table of Contents.** An example is provided in this activity. You can adapt it to your portfolio.

☐ **Job-Related Skills.** Students should indicate full-time, part-time, paid, and unpaid work experiences. Items they may want to include are:

- Internships or shadowing experiences
- Documentation of skills demonstrated on the job
- Class projects
- Competency certificates
- Photographs or videos of work projects
- Instructor or mentor evaluations
- Progress reports
- Special licenses

- ❑ **Educational Records.** Students may include an overview of their educational achievements such as courses completed and examples of favorite class projects. Possible items to include are:
  - Technical skills
  - Appropriate academic skills
  - Transcripts
  - Diplomas
  - Courses taken that relate to career and educational goals
  - Photographs or videos or artwork from class projects
  - Test scores, ACT results, or SAT results
  - Writing or research projects
  
- ❑ **Employability Skills.** Students may describe and document experiences that reflect their interpersonal and dependability skills—those skills that demonstrate their professionalism. Skills may include:
  - Teamwork/interpersonal skills
  - Attendance/punctuality
  - Initiative/dependability
  - Written and verbal communication skills
  - Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
  
- ❑ **Career Development Plan.** Students may include materials that show their career and educational goals and plans for achieving them. They may also want to include items they have prepared to assist them in seeking employment in their chosen field. Possible items include:
  - 4 or 6 year plan of study
  - Career and educational goals
  - Résumé
  - Letter of application
  - Letters of reference
  - Follow-up letter
  
- ❑ **Activities, Awards and Community Service.** Students may include descriptions of their special interests, activities, and achievements in school. It is also beneficial for them to provide information about their participation in community events, particularly volunteer work. Possible activities to highlight include:
  - Leadership activities
  - Sports, clubs, hobbies
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Awards
  - Volunteer or service learning experiences

### Sample Table of Contents

ITEMS	SECTION
<b>JOB-RELATED SKILLS</b>	<b>A</b>
Competency Certificates .....	A1
Instructor or Mentor Evaluations .....	A3
Progress Reports .....	A5
License .....	A7
<b>EDUCATIONAL RECORDS</b>	<b>B</b>
Diplomas .....	B1
Transcripts .....	B3
Test Scores .....	B5
<b>EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS</b>	<b>C</b>
Attendance Profile	
<b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>	<b>D</b>
Résumé .....	D1
Letter of Application .....	D3
Letters of Reference .....	D5
Follow-up Letter .....	D7
<b>ACTIVITIES, AWARDS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE</b>	<b>E</b>
Certificates .....	E1
Community Service Projects .....	E3
Newspaper Articles .....	E5